

1 Corinthians 15:1-28

Verses 1-2:

--**Moreover** brings us to the introduction of a new subject that Paul had saved—by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—to the end of this letter. Paul needs to address a segment in the church that does not believe in the resurrection—see **12 + some among you. . .**

--So he is going to show that the gospel message they believed in the beginning, was what came from God, what the Scriptures said, and was the universal apostolic message.

--Paul wants to **declare** or remind them of the gospel message that change them at the very start. Notice the progression here of: **I preached. . . you received. . . you stand. . . you are saved.**

--The change that the gospel produced in their life was a living proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is always what our witness (or testimony) actually is—no matter how sensational or common the details are.

John 1:12-13: But as many as received him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

--Paul is saying this in warning to those in **12** who are pushing this false teaching. If we do not hold to the true gospel message, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have a worthless faith.

Christians are called to judge the gospel message and actions of others, but the message is a pass or fail, while actions are one by one. Correction for wrong action, without questioning the salvation of the Corinthians in sin, has basically been this whole letter.

Verses 3-11:

--This section is not just an apologetic for the fact of the resurrection. Paul is showing that there has only ever been one gospel message and resurrection is an essential part of that message. The two are inseparable.

--**(3-4) First of all**, or most importantly, Paul's message was not one that came from man. It was divine revelation corroborated by the Scriptures. This is what Paul always claims about his gospel as in **11:23 + Galatians 1:12**.

--Not only that, but the gospel message—resurrection included—was God's testimony about Himself through the Scriptures!

Luke 24:45-47: And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said unto them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.

--Isn't it remarkable that the literal, resurrected Jesus Christ, stands before disciples and solidifies their faith in Him through their comprehension of the Word of God! What was John the apostles' testimony of his own belief?

John 20:8-9: Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

--Resurrection was that missing piece of the puzzle between the Suffering Servant Messiah and the Reigning King Messiah. ***Read Acts 13:26-41***

--Do we believe God's testimony of His satisfaction in the work of His Son?

2:1-2: And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

--(5) **Cephas** was Peter and he had a particular meeting with Jesus. We don't know the details but we are told of it in **Luke 24:34**.

--The twelve were obviously the apostles as Matthias was no doubt present in the upper room.

--(6) This was **brethren**—so men and women who followed Christ in His earthly ministry. This could have been at His ascension or during the forty days He taught them before the ascension—**Acts 1:3**.

--(7) This meeting with James—Jesus' oldest brother in the flesh—was important because he was one who had not believed in Jesus before His resurrection but did after (**John 7:2-9 + Gal. 1:19**).

--(8) Finally, Paul brings in his own testimony as an apostle and one **born out of due time**. . . which could be translated *miscarried* or *as an abortion*. The idea is an unnatural birth.

--(9-10) Here, Paul wants to magnify the grace of God in his life—the grace that turned God's literal enemy who **persecuted the church of God** into the man who **labored more abundantly than they all**.

--This is Paul's personal life witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ! How else could this man have been so changed? ***Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17***

--I think it is also worth noting that Paul will not deny his own labor *because* it is the grace of God in him. This is not pride. This is worship. Do we deny the work of God in us because of our past sins? Really that is spiritual insecurity or false humility.

--When there is a true and miraculous work of grace in our lives we should all be able to say of it—**yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me**.

--(11) Here Paul brings to completion his final point that this message of a resurrected Christ *is the testimony of God about His Son and the only apostolic gospel!*

--If someone or even some supernatural being preaches any other message, let them be eternally damned.

Verse 12:

--Here is the central issue of this chapter. There were **some among** the Corinthians that said that there was no resurrection. We don't know the details of what this lie or false teaching looked like. There are many guesses but they are all speculation in the end.

--We do know that Jews (**Acts 23:6-9 + 26:6-8: Pharisees Vs. Sadducees**), Greeks (**Acts 17:32: Paul at Athens**), and the early church had to deal with these issues then—even with living witnesses still on the earth! *So don't lose heart today!*

2 Timothy 2:16-18: *But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.*

--These guys were the crazy Youtube preachers of their day! Stop watching that crap! All of this type of stuff is in direct conflict with God's Word and all apostolic doctrine.

Verses 13-19:

--Here Paul logically takes up the case of these false teachers and shows how the resurrection of Christ is inextricably woven into the gospel message and into God's plan for the ages.

--If the resurrection is not true, then:

--**(13-15)** Both the apostles and God are false witnesses.

--**(16-17)** If Christ did not rise then we are still dead in our sins.

John 8:24: *Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.*

--**(18)** All those who have passed on before us have perished. They are eternally lost.

--**(19)** We have no hope in this life. The Greek word for **pitiable** is only used twice in the NT. Here, and in **Rev. 3:17** where Jesus Himself uses it of Laodicea.

Verses 20-22:

--Praise God that is not true! Our eternal life and resurrection is secured by His eternal life and resurrection. Jesus was among the dead and then came out from among them! Jesus is our Passover Lamb in death but He is our Firstfruits in resurrection.

--This means that Jesus is the first and best of a similar harvest yet to come.

John 12:24: *Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.*

--This is Paul's smaller version of **Romans 5:12-21**. The idea being that there are only two fountainheads of life. Adam gives sinful life that leads to death. Jesus gives eternal life that leads to resurrection.

--The Son of Man and Son of God—who bore our sins and carried our iniquities—was resurrected and received back into heaven. Which means that whatever sins of mine He carried have already been proven to be done away with.

--His entrance into heaven as my Forerunner secures my future entrance.

Romans 4:25: *Who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*

Verses 23-28:

--There are a lot of end times discussions based around these verses. That is fine but I think it is important to get one thing straight. What is Paul saying to the Corinthians?

--Paul is saying that as the ***firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep***; Jesus Christ's rising out from among the dead in resurrection—never to return!—has set in motion the next stage of God's ultimate plan to have dominion over all things—even death itself!

--This is an epic passage! What the Corinthians are supposed to see is that Christ's resurrection is essential to that plan of the ages and so then is ours.

--**(23-24)** That is Paul's point here in speaking about an ***order*** in resurrection. The word for ***order*** here has the idea of a *band*, such as a band of soldiers.

--The language gives us a clear succession of events that cannot be tied together in immediacy as some of our amillennial brethren try to do. There is an obvious a space of two thousand years between part one (Christ's resurrection) and part two (Our resurrection).

--That means there is no problem with there being a space between part two (Our resurrection) and part three (the end of all things).

--That space—which is the millennial reign of Christ—is further described by Paul and the Scriptures as a time when: ***He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.***

(This also fits with Jesus' description of resurrection in **John 5:25 + 28-29**. The first ***hour*** that Christ speaks of has lasted many years. So too the second ***hour*** Christ speaks of can also be over a period of time. In fact, it would seem more likely considering the first usage.)

--Paul says Christ was the first. Then there will be men, in ordered bands, resurrected. Then will be the end of it all when Christ reigns and all enemies—even death itself—are brought into subjection.

--So for people who want to argue about what the exact ***order*** is and when those resurrections happen—(pre-trib/post-trib/etc.) that is not Paul's point here. Nothing definitive is established here other than the fact that there will be an order of resurrections like Jesus' who is our Firstfruits.

--In terms of resurrection, we have two Biblical categories: the First Resurrection (which includes all who are resurrected to eternal life in their order) and the Second Resurrection (which takes in all who are resurrected to eternal separation from God—**Jn. 5:29; Rev. 20:12-15**).

--In the First Resurrection we have:

- 1) Jesus Christ as our firstfruits: **1 Cor. 15:20+23; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:18**
- 2) Whatever happened at the death of Christ: **Matt. 27:50-53**

3) The Church in Christ—those who sleep in Christ and those who are alive at the rapture: **1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:13-18**

4) The two witnesses in Jerusalem: **Rev. 11:9-11**

5) The tribulation martyrs and the Old Testament saints: **Dan. 12:1-2**

****Revelation 20:4-6: And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.****

--Again, Paul's point is that Christ's resurrection secures all the future resurrections that follow His own—*So how can some of you say that there is no resurrection?!*

--**(25-28)** With that context in mind, Paul does tell us some wonderful things about the kingdom of God and the very end of all things.

--First, we see that once Christ's kingdom comes it will be eternal. It will give place to no other kingdom.

--Second, we see that the risen Christ is the Ultimate Steward, who gives back to His Father a full accounting of faithful stewardship! (**Ps. 2:7; 110:1; Dan. 7:13-14**). This picture of the risen Christ should cause us to worship Him!

*Bellett (The Son of God): "The Son Himself delights to be all this—the Steward or Servant of the will of God, whether in grace or in glory, in humiliation or in power. And when we, in the spirit of worship, consider or recollect *who* He is throughout all changes and conditions, we can and will say, that changes and conditions, whether the highest or the lowest, are as nothing. What, in one sense, can raise such a One? Can glory and a kingdom elevate Him? Faith finds it easy indeed to see such a One as Steward of power and dominion and royal honors, when He comes to sit on a throne, just as He was a Steward when He traversed in weakness and humiliation the path of life. Such distances, in one sense, are nothing to such a One as 'the Son.'"*

--A key part of the Biblical narrative is Christ's visible rule and reign on the face of this earth ***till He has put all enemies under His feet***. This world will know the risen Jesus Christ as King of Kings as He rules and reigns from Jerusalem.

--All the enemies of God will be subjected under the rule and reign of Jesus Christ on earth. All enemies in nature, in humanity, and in the supernatural realm. And in the end, even death itself, as the last enemy, will be subjected to the reign of Jesus Christ.

--This is another doctrine that is clearly taught in Scripture that our amillennial or postmillennial brothers and sisters cannot escape. Jesus will not rule the new heavens and earth with a rod of iron. He will rule this earth with a rod of iron until all His enemies are subdued and then will be the end of all things.

Psalm 2:8-9: Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.

Psalm 8:6: You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.

Psalm 110:1-2: The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make You enemies Your footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!

Revelation 2:26-27: And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'—as I also have received from My Father. (Here in Revelation we have Jesus Christ promising those in the Church Age a future sharing {**they shall**} with Him of His rule with a rod of iron.)

--Here we see the Messiah's worldwide kingdom reign shared with those of the church from the mouth of Jesus Christ Himself. So we see many thrones promised in the reign of Christ on earth as He shares His rule over the nations with us.

--But in the new heavens and new earth—in that great city the New Jerusalem—there is only one throne: **the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it (Rev. 22:3).**

--(28) And what do we see when all things have been made subject to Christ? In His absolute power we see absolute surrender. Behold the Son of Man and the Son of God!

--Whose hands will visibly hold the reigns of this eternal kingdom? In the end, when Christ has made all things right, it will be the Father's. And this is the part that we all agree on. The final state of things in a new heavens and new earth.

*Bellett (The Son of God): "And when the Son has been thus displayed, as in weakness and in strength, as on earth and in heaven, from the manger to the throne, as the Nazarene and the Bethlehemite, the Lamb of God and the anointed Lord of all, according to the predestination of eternal counsels, these heavens and earth which now are will have done all they had to do; *when they have continued unto this display of the Son, they have continued long enough.* They may give place; and the soul that has surveyed them as having accomplished such a service may be prepared to hear this from the prophet of God, "I saw a new heavens and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.""*